

Message Text

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ACTION AGRE-00

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 EB-08 AID-05 COME-00 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 L-03 IGA-02 /036 W

-----080846Z 068750 /13

P 071055Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3761

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FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAID, EAGR, BG

SUBJ: AUTHORITY TO OPEN PL-480, TITLE I NEGOTIATIONS

REF: STATE 43281

1. SUMMARY: THE CONTINUING ABSENCE OF AUTHORITY TO OPEN PL-480 NEGOTIATIONS HERE IS: 1) CAUSING SERIOUS EMBARRASSMENT; 2) LOSING US GOODWILL; 3) MAKING US A DONOR OF LAST RESORT (WHICH WASHINGTON SAYS IT WANTS TO AVOID); AND 4) RAPIDLY DIMINISHING THE RELEVANCE THIS YEAR OF ELEMENTS IN OUR PROPOSED SELF-HELP MEASURES. I NEED AUTHORITY TO OPEN NEGOTIATIONS IMMEDIATELY. END SUMMARY.

2. ALTHOUGH OUR PL-480, TITLE 1 NEGOTIATING INSTRUCTIONS (REFTEL) HAVE ARRIVED (SIX WEEKS AFTER THE DATE WE HAD PROPOSED FOR OPENING THESE NEGOTIATIONS), I STILL DO NOT HAVE AUTHORITY TO USE THOSE INSTRUCTIONS.

3. OUR INABILITY TO BEGIN NEGOTIATIONS FOR EVEN A MODEST LEVEL OF 200,000 MT OF GRAIN HAS BECOME A SOURCE OF DISTINCT EMBARRASSMENT HERE. IT IS INCREASINGLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DIFFICULT FOR BDG OFFICIALS TO ACCEPT AT FACE VALUE OUR EFFORTS AT EXPLAINING THE PROLONGED DELAY IN OPENING THESE NEGOTIATIONS. THE SIMPLE EXPLANATIONS -- OUTDATED CONCERN WITH STORAGE LOSSES, USUAL BUREACRATIC INEFFICIENCY, AND UNAVOIDABLE DELAYS ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROCESS OF POLITICAL CHANGE OVER IN THE US -- ARE NO LONGER CONVINCING AND THE BDG OFFICIALS ARE BEGINNING

TO WONDER WHAT POLITICAL MOTIVATIONS THE US MAY HAVE
IN THIS MATTER.

4. AS THE EARLIEST ARRIVAL DATE FOR ANY FY 1977 TITLE I
FOODGRAIN NECESSARILY ADVANCES WITH EACH PASSING WEEK,
THE BDG IN COOPERATION WITH THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAM MUST
MAKE OTHER ARRANGEMENTS TO BRING IN FOODGRAINS. WE ARE
UPDATING BY SEPTEL THE LATEST FOODGRAIN FORECAST (DACCA
A-28) BUT SINCE THAT FORECASE WAS ISSUED,
THE EEC HAS SAID IT IS PREPARED TO SHIP AN ADDITIONAL
70,000 MT, THE FRG HAS AGREED TO SHIP 40,000, AND THE
CANADIANS (THROUGH THE WFP FOR FOOD FOR WORK) 65,000 MFT.
WE ARE, WILLY-NILLY, BECOMING THE DONOR OF LAST RESORT.
NO SHIPMENTS FROM THE US COULD NOW REACH BANGLADESH
BEFORE MID-AUGUST, WHEN MONSOON WEATHER WILL FURTHER
REDUCE THE 100,000 MT MONTHLY CAPACITY OF THE INADEQUATE
AND CRIPPLED FACILITIES AT CHITTAGONG.

5. WE HAD EXPECTED THAT A VIGOROUS PRESENTATION OF
SELF-HELP MEASURES REFLECTING THE NEW PL-480 LEGISLATION
AND IN LINE WITH THE BDG'S OWN GOAL OF FOODGRAIN SELF-
SUFFICIENCY COULD, IN A YEAR OF HIGH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE
STOCKS (LIMITING THE RISKS OF FOOD SHORTAGES) ENCOURAGE
NEW FOOD POLICY MEASURES BY THE BDG. DUE TO THE INEXPLICABLE
DELAY IN RECEIPT OF NEGOTIATING AUTHORITY, THAT
OPPORTUNITY IS LARGELY LOST. FOR EXAMPLE, A SELF-HELP
CALL FOR MEETING THE 500,000 MT PROCUREMENT DRIVE IS
SIMPLY TOO UNREALISTIC NOW TO PROMPT ANY SERIOUS
CONSIDERATION (THROUGH FEBRUARY, PROCUREMENT STANDS AT
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235,000, AND THE AMAN PROCUREMENT DRIVE IS WELL PAST
ITS END-JANUARY PEAK).

6. WE CAN NOW EXPECT ONLY TO BRING OUR VIEDBUINTS TO THE
ATTENTION OF BDG ECONOMIC POLICY MAKERS AS A MATTER OF
RECORD AND TO BUILD ON THAT RECORD IN FUTURE YEARS; WE
VERY MUCH DOUBT THAT WE CAN PROVOKE REALLY SERIOUS BDG
CONSIDERATION OF THOSE MEASURES THIS YEAR ACTH STOCKS
NOW AT REDUCED LEVELS AND THE BORO OUTLOOK UNCERTAIN.

7. WHAT WE CAN STILL DO BY OPENING NEGOTIATIONS AT ONCE
IS TO END MOUNTING SPECULATION AND DOUBTS HERE ABOUT OUR
MOTIVATIONS IN THIS MATTER AND STOP THE CURRENT EROSION
OF GOOELRIOZ NECESSARILY ASSOCIATED WITH OUR FAILURE TO
COMMIT OURSELVES TO PROVIDING SOME OF THE FOOD NEEDED
THIS YEAR.
MASTERS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PL 480 TITLE 1, NEGOTIATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 07-Mar-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977DACCA01175
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770079-0082
Format: TEL
From: DACCA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770387/aaaacyss.tel
Line Count: 114
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 755a81bc-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AGRE
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 43281
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3190073
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AUTHORITY TO OPEN PL-480, TITLE I NEGOTIATIONS
TAGS: EAID, EAGR, BG
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/755a81bc-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009